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The President's Daily Brief

March 21, 1974

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

March 21, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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The USSR has supplied Somalia with the SA-2 surface-to-air missile system and MIG-21 aircraft. (Page 2)

The Khmer Communists, despite their victory at Oudong this week, are showing signs of losing some of their military momentum. (Page 3)

Some 66,000 North Vietnamese troops have started south since early September, the second lowest total for comparable periods in the past six dry seasons.
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Foreign Minister Jobert, in recent talks with his Italian counterpart, outlined a French plan for a new European confederation. (Page 5)

The firepower of the South Sea Fleet, traditionally the smallest of China's three fleets, has been significantly increased. (Page 6)

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USSR

The Soviets are modernizing SS-11 silos at two more ICBM complexes in preparation for a new ICBM. [redacted] work under way at Perm in the western USSR and Gladkaya in the central part of the country. The most likely missile to be installed in the modernized silos is the SS-11 Mod 3, which carries three re-entry vehicles that are not independently targetable.

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SOMALIA-USSR

The Soviets have supplied Somalia with the SA-2 surface-to-air missile system and MIG-21 aircraft.

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SA-2 missile equipment at a SAM support facility northwest of Mogadiscio.

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An SA-2 launch site was also observed in the early stages of construction in the same area. Although Somali military personnel have had some training on the SA-2, they probably still cannot operate them without Soviet assistance.

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News of these arrivals is certain to increase the nervousness of the Ethiopian Government, which has long-standing territorial quarrels with Somalia.

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CAMBODIA

Despite their victory at Oudong this week, the Khmer Communists are showing signs of losing some of their military momentum. The insurgents entered the present dry season with great expectations; they hoped that by concentrating most of their forces in the Phnom Penh area, they could score a quick "total victory" over the government. They have failed, and losses have been high.

Intercepted messages indicate that the Communists' morale and confidence have been eroded. The seizure of Oudong will help raise their spirits, but that victory--which may be short-lived--is pretty much a consolation prize.

The Communists have paid other costs for their military preoccupation with Phnom Penh. As insurgent units from the countryside have moved into the capital region, the Communist forces left in some rural areas have been hard put to oppose Cambodian Army actions. Weakening of the Communists' local security in turn has made it more difficult for Communist civil administrators to maintain their hold over villagers who are already resentful over oppressive population control measures. Over 45,000 civilians have voluntarily left Communist zones in the past month to resettle around such provincial capitals as Kompong Thom and Pursat.

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The Communists are by no means assured of taking either Kampot or Kompong Thom. The government is alert to both threats and, particularly at Kampot, is building up its own forces.

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NORTH VIETNAM

Some 66,000 North Vietnamese troops have started south since early September--the second lowest total for comparable periods in the past six dry seasons. This is only slightly more than Hanoi sent south in 1969-70, and it is substantially lower than the total observed before the 1972 spring offensive.

According to intercepts, 21 infiltration groups--about 11,000 men--have started south so far in March. If infiltration continues at this rate, March's total will exceed 16,000 troops. Continuation of this rate into May would bring the total for this dry season to the relatively moderate level--94,000--of last year's dry season.

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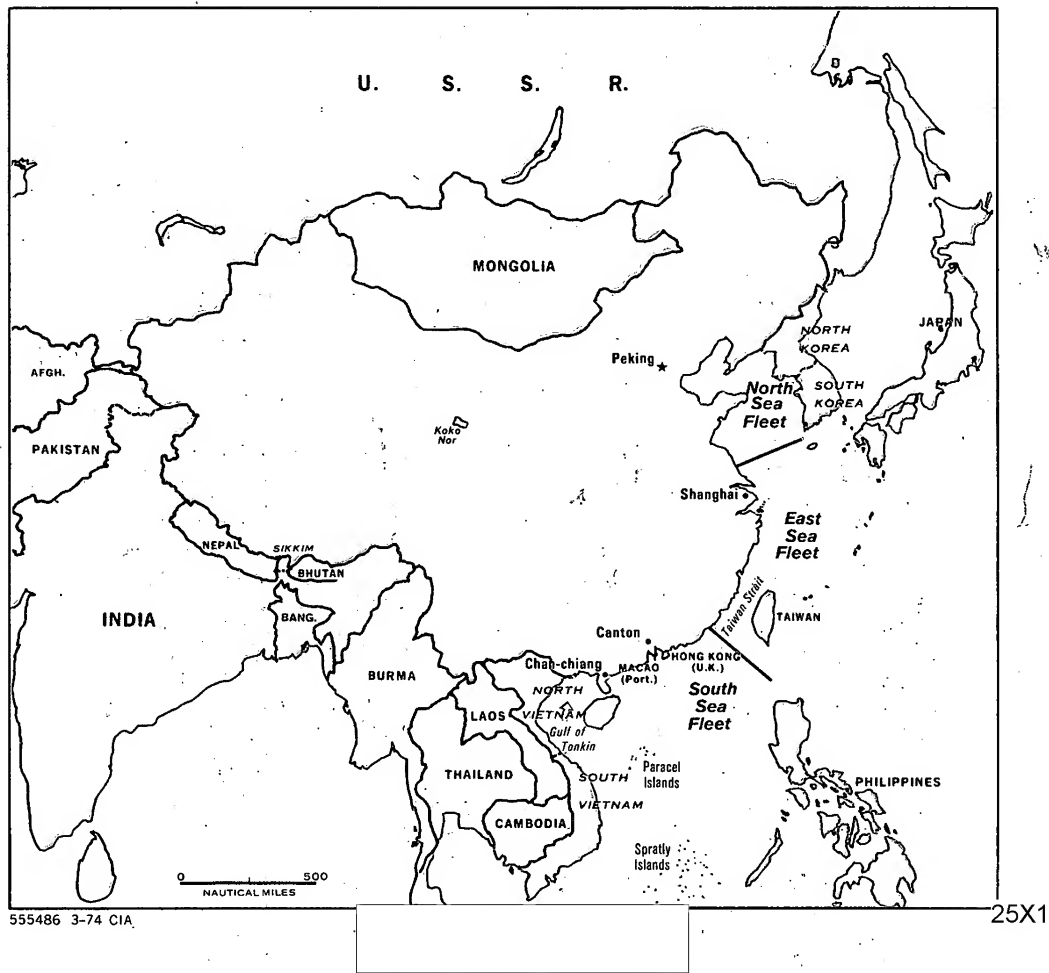
FRANCE-EC

Foreign Minister Jobert outlined a French plan for a new European confederation during talks with his Italian counterpart on March 15-16. The plan, which calls for an executive, a political secretariat, and a bicameral parliament, will be offered at the EC summit scheduled for late May, although the scheme would function outside existing community institutions.

The executive could be rotated among member states, while the parliament would be composed of a senate representing confederal interests and a chamber based on population. At least the chamber would be elected directly.

Although some elements of this scheme seem to be significant concessions to France's EC partners, Jobert's proposal reflects France's long-standing desire to circumvent formal EC institutions in developing European political unity.

The plan also is apparently part of a wider initiative on European unity that includes France's recent proposal for a European energy organization and possibly an initiative to set up a new type of joint float against the dollar.



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CHINA

The firepower of the South Sea Fleet, long the smallest of China's three fleets, has been significantly increased. [REDACTED] three Riga-class guided-missile destroyer escorts, eight Osa-class guided-missile boats, 22 Styx cruise missile crates, and two R-class attack submarines at naval facilities near Chan-chiang, where the South Sea Fleet is based.

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Since driving the South Vietnamese out of the Paracel Islands in January, the Chinese have been expanding the areas covered by regular military operations in the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea.

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NOTES

USSR-China: Moscow is making a propaganda issue out of what appears to have been a minor incident on the Sino-Soviet border west of Mongolia. Tass charged yesterday that Peking has refused to return a Soviet helicopter and its crew of three that made an emergency landing just inside Chinese territory on March 14. According to Tass, the helicopter lost its way while on a mission of mercy. In publicizing the incident, the Soviets may hope to head off any Chinese effort to exploit it as evidence of Soviet espionage activity against China.

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Mozambique: Anti-Portuguese rebels in Mozambique may soon be using Soviet-supplied SA-7 missiles.

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USSR-Bangladesh: The last two Soviet mine-sweepers involved in harbor-clearing operations at Chittagong are en route home. As many as 14 naval auxiliaries have taken part in Soviet clearing and salvage activities there since March 1972; only five remain. The entire operation is scheduled to conclude by the end of June.

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